

To the Right Honourable, the Knights, Citizens, and Burgeses in the  
PARLIAMENT assembled.

The humble Petition of the Commoners, Myners, Free-holders, and other the Inhabitants in the Forest of Dean, in the County of Gloucester and Hereford,

SHE W E T H,

**T**HAT your Petitioners have a clear, and undoubted right to have Common of Pasture, and Common of Estovers, within the Forest of Dean.

That these have many Rights, Customes, and Priviledges belonging unto them; as Myners, for searching of Mines, sinking of Pits in any place whatsoever, within the sayd Forest: And that the Constable, Gavilers, and Verdurers of the sayd Forest ought to hold Courts once every two Weeks, and once in every forty dayes, where the sayd Constable, Gaviler, and Verdurers ought upon request to assign Timber to the sayd Myners for Supportation of their Mynes; and if the sayd Verdurers shall refuse, or neglect the assigning of such Timber as shall be convenient: That then the sayd Myners may, and by their Priviledges and Customes time out of mind, ought, of right to fell and carry to their Gale place, for the Supportation of their Mynes, what Timber shall be necessary.

That the Foundation of this Right is an ancient Prescription, presented by severall Regarders of the Forest, and time out of mind allowed and enjoyed accordingly, and was further settled by a Decree at the Suit of the Commoners in the Exchequer, and stands confirmed in the late A<sup>t</sup> of Perambulation in 17. Car.

For which and other their Rights and Priviledges, your Petitioners have, and do still pay Heriots. And do pay unto his Highness Court of Exchequer, and other Officers, a considerable yearly Rent, commonly called Swine Silver, Mark money, and Gale, and have accordingly in many ages past, in the Reign of King James, King Charles, and his late Highness the Lord Protector enjoyed the same, they having been alwaies taithfull to, and for the Common-wealth of England.

Notwithstanding all which, John Wade Esq; upon severall pretenses and mis-constructions of an A<sup>t</sup> passed the late Parliament, entituled, *An A<sup>t</sup> for the mitigation of the rigor of the Forest Laws, &c.* The sayd Jo. Wade doth by a violent and Arbitrary power, where he is an Officer of the power of the Forest intrusted for the good of your Petitioners, delude and defraud them of their Rights, and in other cases doth by force hinder them of their Rights, and takes from them their Priviledges, by debarring them from Timber and Wood for the support of Cole-works, and Iron-Oare-Works, and from digging Quarries of Stone in the Wastes of the Forest. Nevertheless he driveth on a Cole-myne himself, in which he spendeth more of the Forest-timber in one year then the Country did in two years, by debarring them of their Common of Estovers, by depriving your Petitioners of their Common of Herbage and Pannage in several parts of the Forest, insomuch that he hath kept the Inhabitants from coming to water their Cattel in the Common, hath destroyed the Wels where the people fetched water for their necessary occasions, hath digged up their washing Troughs, and cleaved them to Cordwood, & hath killed many mens Cattel.

That under pretense and mis-construction of the A<sup>t</sup> for mitigating the Forest-Laws, never were Forest-Laws executed with more cruelty, and Arbitrariness, by Imprisoning some for taking up a bundle of Chips not worth a Penny, others for breaking smal sprigs of Holly not worth a Farthing, others for cutting Fern to cover their houses, others for cutting of Gorse, by threatening to take away poor mens Coal, if they wil not give him what Composition he pleaseth, by threatening poor people to have the Tenth of all their Labors; And that he will enforce those who live on the Commons side, to turn the doors of their houses, so as they may not come out into the Common. That the sayd John Wade contrary to a Decree in the Exchequer, under a pretense and mis-construction of the A<sup>t</sup> for mitigating the Forest Laws, hath instead of inclosing one third of the sayd Forest, inclosed the one half of the sayd Forest. These and many such like things doth the sayd John Wade a<sup>t</sup>, with an high hand upon your poor Petitioners, to the utter ruine of some hundreds of Familiers.

Wherefore your Petitioners most humbly pray, that your Honors will be pleased to take the Premisses into your serious Considerations, and grant your Petitioners a certain day wherein they may make proof of what they here alledge, that so by your favor and Justice for the future, your Petitioners may enjoy their Rights, Customes, and Priviledges, and the Violaters of them receive such Condign Punishment, as to your Justice shall seem meet, whereby many hundreds will be kept from starving, who now are exposed to all kind of Hazard and Ruine.

*This is a true Copy. Jo. Smith Clerk of the  
Parliament to attend the Commons.*

And they shall ever pray, &c.

*Thursday the 07 of April, 1659. At the Grand Committee for Grievances and Courts of Justice.*

**T**He humble Petition of the Commoners, Myners, Free-holders, and other the Inhabitants in the Forest of Dean, in the County of Gloucester and Hereford was this day read.

**O**R D E R D,  
THAT John Wade Esq; be summoned to appear on Wednesday come three weeks, before the Committee, to make his defence to this Petition, And that a Copy of this Petition be delivered to Mr. Wade in the mean time, and that Counsell, and Witneses be then heard upon the merits of the Matters contained in the sayd Petition.

*John Smith Clerk of the Parliament to attend the Commons.*